

Gun Dealer: Another State Sponsored Assault in California

J.J. Johnson - Posted: 05.29.00

MODESTO, CA - Steve Wilson, Owner of Buffalo Arms is running for a U.S. Congressional seat in the 18th District of California. His opponent, Democrat Congressman Gary Condit is a strong Clinton supporter and good friend of California Attorney General Bill Lockyer. On May, 23, 2000 Steve Wilson's business, his livelihood, and his family became the latest victims of the on-going siege of the Constitution.

At about 5:30 p.m., according to Wilson, "between six and eight agents" from the California Department of Justice stormed in to Buffalo Arms, located on the corner of 8th and K streets in downtown Modesto with a warrant for a "compliance check." The warrant was for an item that *could* be used in a felony.

Wilson is the only gun dealer in the 18th district that has been subjected to a surprise compliance check." He said, "Any compliance officer may be told to leave and come back at a better time [within 3 days and to allow for the store owner to arrange for] the presence of an attorney." Steve Wilson was denied this right. "We were detained at the business - myself, my wife, mother, and 18-year-old daughter. There were no guns pointed at us per se, but I had two officers on each side of me during the entire event, which lasted about 2 hours."

As per Wilson's Attorney's instructions, Wilson would not give details of what was stolen from his place of business. Sources close to the Justice department revealed to the Sierra Times that the items seized included "assault rifles, assault pistols, and assault shotguns." One source went on to say, "About a dozen questionable weapons were confiscated by agents of the California Department of Justice. Not only were weapons taken but all the books, files and receipts from Buffalo Arms." Without the paperwork and files that the law requires a licensed gun dealer to keep and maintain, a dealer cannot conduct business.

"We have been disabled from functioning because of an implicit threat," said Wilson. Wilson exhibited noticeable discomfort during a telephone interview with SierraTimes due to what he described as a "conspicuous white van (with tinted windows)" that was parked across the street. The white van, marked with a "Department of Corrections" logo left during the interview with Sierra Times.

Such nervousness is common among victims of state-sponsored assaults long after the initial raid. Wilson is also very concerned about the health of his mother who also present during the raid. She suffers from a heart condition.

This is the first challenge in California for a dealer who may have dealt weapons that "might" be construed as assault type weapon under California Senate Bill 23. This bill became effective for firearms dealers January 1st, 2000 and becomes effective for the general population on January 1, 2001. If this case goes to criminal court, "it could set the stage for confiscation of all weapons in California that might fall under the loosely defined statutes of SB23," according to legal expert Nancy Johnson, a licensed attorney in California.

Steve Wilson defeated three other opponents in the Republican primary for the 18th Districts' congressional seat. He only spent \$500 on campaign expenses and received 30% of the total GOP vote. This is compared to his Democratic opponent who has raised almost \$300,000 so far.

Gary Condit (D-CA) was a co-sponsor of H.R.347 - a bill to protect the right to obtain firearms for

security, and to use firearms in defense of self, family, or home, and to provide for the enforcement of such rights.

Wilson is a member of several second Amendment organizations, including being Life Member of the Second Amendment Society, President of the local NRA council of Stanislaus County, and a founding member of the Madison Society.